Angles
New Perspectives on the Anglophone World

3 | 2016
Angles and *limes*

Partying Critics: A Dual Take on Duality in Graham Greene's "The End of the Party"

Nathalie Jaëck and Arnaud Schmitt

Electronic version
URL: http://journals.openedition.org/angles/1693
DOI: 10.4000/angles.1693
ISSN: 2274-2042

Publisher
Société des Anglicistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur

Electronic reference
Nathalie Jaëck and Arnaud Schmitt, « Partying Critics: A Dual Take on Duality in Graham Greene's "The End of the Party" », *Angles* [Online], 3 | 2016, Online since 01 November 2016, connection on 28 July 2020. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/angles/1693 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/angles.1693

This text was automatically generated on 28 July 2020.

Angles. New Perspectives on the Anglophone World is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Partying Critics: A Dual Take on Duality in Graham Greene's "The End of the Party"

Nathalie Jaëck and Arnaud Schmitt

1 This issue of *Angles* dealing with different practices of criticism seemed to us a very welcome opportunity to do something we rarely do: look back on our practices as critics, assess the specific nature, the role and the relevance of our critical tools, measure our ability to make these tools evolve and to bring in new references or methods, and perhaps above all try to explain how the selection of specific tools reveals and clarifies our respective conceptions of our fields of expertise. Indeed, reflecting on critical practices and choices is a way to delineate what our analysis of our object and of its epistemological value is—and this is currently a crucial question as far as literature is concerned. At a time when the role and the "use" of literature are everywhere under discussion or even under scrutiny, when the dominant utilitarian paradigm often leads to questioning the pertinence of funding research in literature in universities, we thought it might be interesting to address the issue via a reflexive and double analysis of two habits of critical practices, their impact on the reading of a selected text, and what they involve in terms of our respective academic practices around literature.

2 It is probably necessary here to say a few words of our individual backgrounds. Our desire to try that critical experiment was based on the assumption that we were similar enough for informed mutual understanding in the field, and different enough in our respective methodological choices for this experiment to be stimulating and enriching. We are both trained in English studies, we both belong to the French 11th section of the CNU (Centre National des Universités) that is accountable for delineating and controlling scientific fields in France. We both chose literature as our major subject; we both studied in French Universities (mainly Toulouse 2 Le Mirail for Arnaud Schmitt, mainly Bordeaux Montaigne for Nathalie Jaëck). We also belong to the exact same generation—we were both born in 1969—, receiving the same academic training based

on a post 1960's conception of literature. Finally, we are both University Professors in literature, in France. As for relevant differences, Nathalie Jaëck is a specialist in 19th-century British literature, with a specific interest in the mutation of the adventure novel at the turn of the century (she wrote her PhD on the Sherlock Holmes stories); Arnaud Schmitt is a specialist of 20th-century American fiction, with a specific interest in autofiction, cognition and Pragmatism. Though we both value narrative studies, we favour that angle from rather different perspectives: Nathalie Jaëck remains very indebted to French classical narratology, and Gérard Genette's categories that have informed her early grasp on literature remain essential tools in the elaboration of her critical discourse on literature. As for Arnaud Schmitt, he studied the categories of narratology from wider, more numerous perspectives, and has been engaged in an enduring theoretical discussion with the concepts used by leading contemporary narratologists, particularly as regards cognitive and pragmatic narration. As to great general lines, Nathalie Jaëck's critical culture owes much to French theory: she is specifically a close reader of Roland Barthes and Gilles Deleuze, and favours a structural approach to literary texts, while defending the idea that literature is a hermeneutical tool to approach central human issues linked to the construction of identity through language.

3 We decided to operate in three steps: to select a common text, to each write an independent analysis of it, and then to produce a joint commentary on both *our* texts, and more specifically on what the whole process reveals about our respective discourses on literature. When we started on the project, our hope was that such an enterprise, one which was completely unusual for both of us, accustomed as we are to working in our own zone of critical comfort, would be a way to help illuminate what the contemporary stakes are, and perhaps the points of debate, when studying literature. We hoped it would be a way to question, put into perspective and also energize our respective methods.

4 We elected to work on "The End of the Party" published by Graham Greene in 1929, for two major reasons. Firstly, it is a text that belongs to neither of our usual corpora, it is a modernist short story, in-between our two respective periods and our two favoured systems of representation (Victorian Realism and post-modern contemporary American fiction); in fact, none of us had read it before embarking on this venture. Secondly, we decided upon a short story rather than an extract from a novel: we thought it would be better to comment upon a whole, self-sufficient work rather than on a fragment, as this would leave no possible interpretative ambiguity owing to the difficulties raised by an incomplete text; it might also give easier access to the readers of this paper, who might want to try their hands and complement our analyses with theirs. Thirdly, we decided, against our typical practices, not to read any other analysis of "The End of the Party" before embarking on ours: we thought getting direct documentation beforehand would skew the exercise.

5 The first part of the paper thus juxtaposes our two respective analyses of "The End of the Party."

"The End of the Party": a modernist short story reflected in its Victorian double (Nathalie Jaëck)

6 On the face of it, "The End of the Party," written by Greene in 1929 and one of his most famous shorter works, is the tragic modernist short story of a muted child, 9 year-old Francis Morton. The dismissal of the voice of the child by indifferent trivializing adults, his inability to access direct speech and voice his intimate fears lead to his dropping dead from a heart-attack at the end of the story after an ominous day of agonizing and increasing panic, despite the efforts of his twin-brother Peter to help him out of his cooped-up self. Fiction comes here to the rescue: summoning free indirect speech, Greene allows the voice of the child to be heard. He gives full scope to Francis's impressions, to his idiosyncrasies and fantasized alternative planning of reality, as symbolic denunciation of, and compensation for, the authoritative framing of the child's voice, as fictional reparation.

7 Yet, "The End of the Party" is also a very ambiguous and unsettling story of twins, taking line in the long tradition of Gothic stories about doubles: the open charge against adults' deafness to children's voices and the efforts of the text to make them heard cover another classical, more disquieting and uncanny subtext, that explores Peter's ambivalence towards his younger twin-brother. It is difficult not to notice that all the steps Peter consciously takes to help his brother tragically contribute to his eventual death, up to the final decisive touch. The story starts and ends with Peter, and the more problematic twin is perhaps not the one we initially thought: by the end of the story, Peter eventually stands the narrative ground alone, and he has got rid of the weaker "other" as he regularly calls his brother—but as Gothic tradition has it, getting rid of the double amounts to self-destruction, as in the process, Peter deprives himself of the convenient back base his brother embodied for him. Dispossessed of the possibility to retroject in his brother the weaker parts of himself he refuses to recognize as his own, he is left in schizophrenic dissociation, in "obscure self-pity" (189)—unable to make the difference between the inside and the outside, mistaking his brother's heartbeat with his own.

8 Story and discourse thus follow the same treatment in Greene's short story: "The End of the Party" is a story about duality, but also a dual text, or rather a text that proposes a fruitful confrontation of dual literary codes: a modernist experiment with voice twinned with a rewriting of a classical Gothic motif—the Double displaced and reflected in the cracked textual modernist mirror. The interest of such duplicity is that it illustrates the fact that voice and identity are intimately linked. Francis's troubles in language—his aphasia, his echolalia, the dissociated opposition between his intimate voice and what he actually utters—are not only literary food for a dashing modernist experiment with discourse. They hark back to other texts, and as opposed to Francis and Peter whose duality proves destructive, "The End of the Party" embraces the creative possibilities of textual duality: it incorporates antagonistic literary codes in a gesture of literary coexistence and tries to access the evading voice of childhood not as picturesque anti-climax but as an excessive, unrecognizable other voice that leads to a reinterpretation of self and otherness.

9 The short story first reads as an attempt at textual amends and compensation: Greene denounces the minoring of the voice of children, inherited from classical humanist tradition that has marked the child as an incomplete and therefore lacking sub-adult,

whose incoherent babble and burble need to be disciplined into coherent *logos*, a minor muted being by definition *infans—infantis* in Latin precisely indicate the inability to speak, a speaking child thus being an etymological oxymoron. This tradition is referred to in the story by the opposition between Francis's "*unreasoning* fear" (185) and the regular return of "that adult refrain, 'There is nothing to fear in the dark'" (186) or "'*You know* there is nothing to be afraid of in the dark'" (184). Reason vs. impressions: armed with knowledge, strengthened by the dialectic force of logic, adults use *logos* as an imperative instrument of power to dismiss from above children's "unreasoning" fears as "child*ish*," the dismissive suffix invalidating their voices. Francis, dealt with in the imperative mode, told about, told off, has thus no alternative but self-repression, "blocking his mouth" (181) as soon as he wakes up, as he expects to be muted by the imperative "cold confidence of a grown-up's retort. 'Don't be silly. You must go. [...] Don't be silly'" (184). The whole short story thus reads as a sort of *sub*-version that aims at re-empowering children through exclusive free indirect speech: it is solely the voice of children that is heard in these long sections, and adults are relegated to a background where direct sentences become stale automatic common phrases that are totally inefficient to grasp the complexity of reality. Greene thus writes a tribute to what Henry James called "the picturing, personifying, dramatizing faculty of infancy, the view of life from the level of the nursery-fender:"[1] he levels the viewpoint indeed, replacing authoritative certainties with tentative impressions, the overhanging controlling standpoint of adults with the fragmented horizontal shifting stance of children, and the unquestionable mimetic indicative mode with experiments on potential and fictive present.

10 The central stakes of the modernist agenda are pretty clear from the second sentence, "Through a window he could see a bare bough dropping across a frame of silver" (181): a limited fragmented perspective, literally framed by the window, a highlight on modalized vision and individual perceptions, and a process of "fictionalization" through language. Entrusted to children, reality becomes unfamiliar and mobile, and language no longer serves to duplicate reality, but to open up more desirable alternatives.

11 Peter and Francis take rank among those "literary impressionists" Julia Van Gusteren defined: "The Literary Impressionists, like the Impressionists in painting focused on perception. They attempted to formulate reality by breaking it into momentary fragments, selected intuitively and subjectively. They relied on sensory (ap)perceptions" (28). Indeed, their day starts with an immediate colonization of solid and measurable reality ("It was January the fifth" [181]) by distorting impressions, subjective memories, imagination, sensations, and uncontrollable dreams: "It amused him to *imagine* that it was himself whom he watched" (181) or "To Peter Morton, the whole room *seemed* suddenly to darken, and he had the *impression* of a great bird swooping" (181) while Francis is caught by the perseverance of the nightmare ("I *dreamed* that I was dead" [182]) and it takes him a while to allow "the *fragmentary memories* to fade" (182), though "a sick empty *sensation*" (182) does not leave him. The Positivist conception of reality, the illusion that one can have a direct understanding of objective facts, as it is quoted in the direct assertive speech of the nurse—"Wind will blow away the germs" (183)—yield under the joint pressure of these subjective distorting stimuli. But the text illustrates the modernist conviction that they are all cognitive clues, that these obscure fears, memories and impressions are all to be trusted, much more than the hackneyed certainties of the parents: the mother's smug

logic leaves her wide off the mark, as she wrongly deduces that Francis's making light of his cold is due to his desire to go to the party. Trusted to Francis and Peter, reality thus becomes mobile, girls are animalized as "cats on padded claws" (182), their animated pigtails fantasized as so many aggressive devices, carpets are on the move, darkness becomes populated with squatting bats; Alice-like, Francis distorts proportions and sizes, and fantasizes himself very small to Mrs Henne-Falcon's "enormous bulk" (185). Defamiliarisation here celebrates the innocence of children in a rather conventional, deludingly reassuring way as it creates comic relief in a growingly ominous and oppressive story—as when Francis reveals he has a different order of priorities, and hopes he might "cut himself or break his leg or really catch a bad cold" (183) rather than go to the party, or when he elaborates many "plans" to escape reality: "They flew too quickly to plan any evasion" (184), "a dozen contradictory plans" (185), "a few extra minutes to form a plan" (186). But these endearing touches are anecdotal: children crucially deterritorialize reality and replace the reliable uniqueness of the fixed indicative mode with endless possibilities of mutations. The potential mode and fictive present replace the authoritative indicative, and both children fantasize a potential reality of what *might* happen. "Would" and "might" become the rule, by far the dominant temporal markers in the story, and reality opens up as a totally blank space: "Anything *might* happen" (183). This creation of a potential soothing double for a reality that is cruel and thus inassimilable is analyzed by Clément Rosset in terms of what he calls "an oracular illusion"[2] (21): "Reality is admitted only under specific conditions and only up to a point: if it exaggerates or proves unpleasant, tolerance is suspended"[3] (8). Indeed, Francis's planning voice amounts to an oracle: possibility turns into certainty, "might" becomes "would" as the confident appeal to God reinforces the oracular nature of the child's voice: "God would manage somehow" (183). Facts are dissolved by fantasy: reality can be hallucinated as other, *ad libitum*.

12 The treatment of time by Peter and Francis reinforces the sense of relativity: chronological collective time, just like solid reality, is deconstructed by random individual perceptions—the very repetition of the date, three times in the first two pages, turns an objective neutral landmark into a double obsession, much desired by Peter, much dreaded by Francis. The story builds a variety of temporal distortions, particularly of the narrative category of duration: objective diachronic time is deconstructed by effects of synchronic short-cuts as the two children superpose in their minds the day of the narration and the same day the year before. Peter "could hardly believe that a year had passed since Mrs. Henne-Falcon had given her last children's party" (181), while the two parties, last year's and next night's, overlap in Francis's mind, leaving absolutely no autonomy to the present. The repressed past returns as prediction of the future and contaminates the present: "Time regresses backwards and runs forwards. It mixes up times and tenses, it goes through them in all directions, it unshackles itself"[4] (Pontalis 13). Similarly time becomes flexible, either extensive when it seems to Francis that the evening is extremely far away ("There was all the morning before him and all the afternoon until four o'clock" [183]) or intensive when the party draws near. The sense of emergency and inescapability is here rendered by the repetitions ("the minutes flew. They flew too quickly" [184]) and above all by the two successive ellipses that engulf part of the precious interval, and time catches up with out-timed and unprepared Francis: "all unready, he found himself standing on the doorstep" (184)—and then, cutting through the journey between the two houses, he finds himself instantly transported to the other hall, without textual notice. The

predictable, measurable continuity and causality of diachronic time are here replaced by intensive discontinuous fragments, and children experience what Jean-François Lyotard called their essential "*passibilité*," that could translate as "liability": they are both necessarily passive and fundamentally "all unready" to what is going to occur, they experience a reality that exceeds and overspills their possibility of understanding it—a reality that is perceived on the mode of permanent irruptive imminence.

13 As Greene gives children a voice back, reparation is thus not his only intention: children also embody an essential relation of primary heteronomy: "liable" to the event, they are invariably exceeded by a sense of estrangement both from the world and from language, and as such, they appeal to the writer as formal models: their dissident *infant tongue* challenges the normative *mother tongue*, they invent what Gilles Deleuze called "a minor use of the major tongue [that] traces within language a sort of foreign tongue, which is not another tongue, but 'a becoming-else' of that tongue, a minor use of that major tongue"[5] (*Critique* 15). Writing thus becomes the paradoxical anamnesis of childhood, the effort to rediscover that liminal state of estrangement, as Lyotard suggested: "No one can write. Everyone, the 'older' one mainly, writes in order to catch through and in the text something that he cannot write. Something that will not be written, as he knows it. Let us call that thing '*infantia*,' what does not speak, what cannot be spoken. A childhood that is not an age in life, but haunts the discourse of adults and escapes its control"[6] (6).

14 Still, as far as reparation is concerned, the text does not go all the way: the voice of children is limited to free indirect speech, apart from a few automatic answers and a few tentative aborted questions that the adults remain absolutely deaf to. In "The End of the Party," Greene marks the typical embedding of the voice of children within an overhanging third-person narration that frames and disciplines the words of the child. Free indirect speech is thus also a stylistic boundary, a way to insist that words cannot be spoken out, that children are not allowed free *direct* speech. The only solution for Francis is to fantasize what he *might have said* if he *could* speak, while remaining morbidly aphasic and obedient. The imperative mode used by the mother cannot be answered, save potentially: "He would answer: 'You can say I am ill. I won't go. I am afraid of the dark.' [...] He could almost hear himself saying those final words" (184). There is thus a pathological dissociation between what we could call his inner voice, what he imagines he could say, and the actual words that automatically come out of his mouth, the way speech is prescribed by the adults' codes. Francis is thus self-muffled, caught in a schizophrenic derailment of symbolisation: "oneself as someone else" indeed. His direct speech opposes his inner voice, or what he allows himself to say when he is alone with his brother. Whereas if he could, "he would answer: 'You can say I am ill. I won't go. I am afraid of the dark'" (184), what he voices is the exact contrary, as he conforms to the image of the obedient child: "I'll get up" (183), "I'm coming" (184), "Good evening, Mrs Henne-Falcon. It was very good of you to ask me to your party" (185). Whenever he tries to address the issue of his fear, once more his language fails him, as he is only able to mimic the form of adults, to opt for a distanced impersonal analysis, and he becomes an instance of what Deleuze and Guattari called "the dried-up child [...] who acts as a child the better when no flux of childhood emanates from him"[7] (*Plateaux* 42): "I think it will be no use my playing" and "I think I had better not play" (186). Francis's words are not his own, they are at odds with the freer "jump-jump" (39) he pronounces in his head, they are the echo of the words of a specular ideal double that he fantasizes and imitates. As opposed to the other children,

whose speech is characterized by grammatical mistakes and easy oral forms, "Oh, do let's" (186), and "don't let's" (185), Francis is caught in morbid echolalia, in the oppressive structures of grammatically correct discourse: he frames his experience through these controlling structures, which owes him the automatic approval of adults —"Sweet child" (185)—but the rejection of other children: "in the precise tone that other children hated, thinking it a symbol of conceit" (186). These troubles in language, either the failure or the alterations of speech, are of course presented as the result of the typical adult muting of the voice of the child. But "The End of the Party" also opens another line of analysis and turns into a case of identity, as it insists that these troubles in symbolisation might also well be symptoms of a more serious case of self-dissociation provoked by the dysfunction of the twins.

15 Peter and Francis present the reader with a classic case of contrasted twins: as René Zazzo developed in his liminal study *Les Jumeaux, le couple et la personne*, twins are not so much two of a pair as the complementary elements of a couple, with a rigid distribution of roles. As the elder twin, Peter is also the dominant twin: active Peter vs. passive Francis, bold Peter vs. fearful Francis, talkative Peter vs. aphasic Francis, "self-relying" Peter (181) vs. dependent Francis. Peter is in charge, and thus plays the role of the major helper to his brother, moved by "an instinct of protection" (181): he speaks for and about his brother ("Francis has got a cold. […] Hadn't he better stay in bed" [183]), and constitutes his brother's only prop-up, as when he delays the dreaded moment of hide-and-seek in the dark by eating another piece of cake and sipping his tea slowly. Peter and Francis thus seem to stand together against adversity: "the brothers came together to the hall" (186). Yet, this sentence reads against another rather different textual network of contradictory clues. Indeed, there is reason to believe that Peter's desire to help his brother is fundamentally ambivalent and obviously counterproductive: not only do all his attempts fail as he himself notices ("It was his third failure" [186]), but every step he takes towards the supposed relief of his brother is a step nearer his loss. From the beginning of the story, hints of such ambivalence are numerous: Peter seems to prey upon his brother from even before he wakes, "with his eyes on his brother" (181). He corners him with the humiliation of publicly revealing his fright thus actualising one of Francis's worst fears, and his move to join Francis behind the bookcase decidedly reads like an animal hunting a crouching prey: "he moved silently and unerringly towards his object" (188), "he led his fingers across his brother's face" (188), "feeling down the squatting figure until he captured a clenched hand" (188), until the oxymoronic form, "to bombard with safety" that inscribes unconscious ambivalence in the forms of language: "he bombarded the drooping form with thoughts of safety" (189). For Peter "his brother" quite revealingly twice embeds and unveils a more estranged and antagonistic form, "the br/other": "*the other* who was afraid of so many things" (181) and "grasping *the other* tightly" (188).

16 At that point, the modernist text becomes the echo of a canonical infratextual double, and the story of Peter and Francis takes rank among famous Victorian pairs—Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Dorian Gray and his portrait, but also Maupassant's *Horla*, or Dostoyevski's *Double*. Killing the other becomes a way to get rid of one's weaker, abject[8] or inassimilable part—just as Dorian Gray destroys his unbearable flawed version. Peter seems to reproduce and heighten the same moves Francis dreaded so much—just like the girls "on padded claws," he "ben[ds] and unt[ies] his laces" (188) to approach Francis in his stockings, as silently as possible, and while Francis "had screamed when

Mabel Warren had put her hand suddenly upon his arm" (182), it is "at the touch of his brother's hand" (189) "across his face" (188) that he drops dead.

17 But it is, of course, no efficient murder, since as in all these canonical cases of duality, Peter mixes inside and outside, self and other—which is naturally favoured by the fact that the two brothers are mirror-images of one another as both acknowledge, though it is worth noting that Francis's analysis of duality is much more elaborate than his brother's. While Peter simply fancies they are the same, without any mediation—"It amused him to imagine it was himself whom he watched, the same hair, the same eyes, the same lips and line of cheek" (181)—Francis's perception makes room for ambivalence and personal dissociation, as he metaphorizes the mediating role of the mirror and the importance of the specular double, of the fantasized image: "To address Peter was to speak to his own image in a mirror, an image a little altered by a flaw in the glass, so as to throw back less a likeness of what he was than of what he wished to be, what he would be without his unreasoning fear" (185). Francis acknowledges the process of projection, the difference between the self and the ideal self, and his brother embodies for him the role of ideal double. The relationship is not so much dual as treble: there is Francis, Peter and the pulsional mediating image, where ambivalence and rivalry can be mediated without directly involving the persons. He makes the difference not only between the self and the other, but above all between the self and *the image of the self*, and the typical prop of the mirror helps him mediate his relation to his own self—his twin is a way to confront his own fears, to recognize them as his own, and thus to address duality and ambivalence as intimate part of the psyche. In his own development, his brother plays the structural role Jacques Lacan isolated for the mirror: Peter symbolizes the successful relation between the Imaginary and The Real, and he is well identified by his brother as such.

18 We should point out that Francis's perception of the world is in fact structured by duality—and in this respect as well, "The End of the Party" can read as a mirroring tribute to Victorian literature. Indeed, it is not only his brother that is a desirable other: girls and women also contribute to the delineation of his self through stereotypical ambivalent dialectics of opposition and desire. Francis is a typical little boy, characteristically disgusted by girls, by their superiority, confidence, even their hair—as in any proper Victorian novel, it is automatically the hair of females that strikes fear and desire in males: "Their long pigtails swung surreptitiously to a masculine stride" (182), "She came striding towards them, pigtails flapping" (183). Joyce and Mabel are two avatars of Medusa, petrifying Francis by their outward self-confident sexual attraction, by their combination of softness and violence ("padded claws" [182]), by their usurpation of masculine power—"their sex humiliated him" (182). But Joyce and Mabel are still imperfect underdeveloped females, still rather harmless, while bosomy Mrs Henne-Falcon is much more dangerous. Her very name is a parody of all the tag-names of Victorian literature: both a hen and a falcon, both harmless and protective and potentially lethal—a domestic bird and a bird of prey. Quite tellingly, Francis is torn between decorous politeness and overwhelming desire, and he cannot help the fixation on her breasts, fantasized as enormous: "his strained face lifted towards the curve of her breasts" (185) and "his eyes focused unwaveringly on her exuberant breasts" (186). Mrs Henne-Falcon is thus reduced by Francis to the two typical roles of women, a hen-like mother, surrounded by "a flock of chicken" (185), and a dangerous (because seductive) female. She is, in Mélanie Klein's categories, both the "good breast," nourishing and protecting, and the "bad breast," potentially

lethal as pulsional partial object: the breasts fuel Francis's concomitant desire and fear. What is certain is that women are anything but protective in the story, though they are typically reduced to their caring role-functions, and the adults failing the child are all women: a nurse, a mother, and a hostess, presumably life-giving, protective and caring, and yet all equally incompetent to protect the child, rushing him to his death. In his intentionally regressive portrayal of that bunch of dangerous females, Greene reactivates the Victorian conception to mark it as a fantasy, but also to highlight the fundamental role of such fantasies in the construction of the self for little boys: othering the opposed sex as a path to difference, desire—and danger.

19 As opposed to Francis's fine confrontation with the process of duality to elaborate his own identity, Peter's treatment of duality is fairly basic, and meant as self-protection: he has simply retrojected onto his twin what he refuses to confront in himself. He will not recognize vulnerability as his own and "ab-jected" Francis thus becomes a convenient outward projection where he can circumscribe and deny his own fears. Compulsive repetition of the same oracular formula—"Then he remembered that the fear was not his own, but his brother's" (186); "but it wasn't his own fear" (187); "He knew that it was his brother's fear and not his own that he experienced" (188)—reads like self-persuasion: it is meant as a performative speech-act, but reads as ironic misapprehension. Indeed, "self-reliance" (181) and "self-sufficiency" (184) are marked as illusions, and the distribution of roles as a schizophrenic temporary way out: when Peter is alone in the dark, his fear starts proliferating, and as he hallucinates squatting bats on hooded wings, the reader realizes that he desperately needs Francis to unburden his fears on him. Killing the double thus does not solve any problem, and Peter's "flaw" (185), diagnosed by his younger brother, surfaces as soon as Francis dies: psychotic syndromes take over, and Peter is no longer able to distinguish the inside and the outside, as he can now feel in himself "the pulse of his dead brother's fear" (189), and grief is tellingly reinterpreted as "an obscure self-pity" (189). Fear is now here to stay, though he cannot figure out its intimate origin. The crisis of identity is thus double, and the projection onto his brother amounts to an alienation to himself: according to Paul Ricœur's categories, the crisis of *idem*, i.e. the crisis of sameness, now amounts to a crisis of *ipse*, i.e. the crisis of selfhood. As Peter cleaved part of himself, and dramatized on the scene of the unconscious the difference between self and other, the mortal blow affects him too: "As it is refigured in narration, the self is in fact confronted with the possibility of its own annihilation"[9] (Ricœur 189). It is as if the stage of the mirror had completely failed, and Peter's perception were fixed at a stage when the separation of his own body from the reflection were not yet achieved: he returns to a fragmented body with disorganized aperceptions and sensations, and his inner, presumably autonomous, voice regresses to a mere quotation of an adult phrase, as final sentence of the story.

20 "The End of the Party" thus presents the reader with a multiple surface of a text. It is a brilliant illustration of the literary standpoints of Modernism, where "Infancy" is turned into a concept that leads to the deterritorialization of dominant semiotics: it is remarkable how French theory has made childhood, because of its inherent relation of estrangement with language and the world, both a creative literary potential and an ethical injunction—Deleuze with the "the becoming-child" ("le devenir-enfant"), and the active concept of the "infant tongue," Lyotard with the idea of the *passibility* of children and the way childhood remains active throughout life as a reminder of our indebtedness to otherness. It is also a more classical case of dual identity, paying a

tribute to a long literary tradition and illustrating its relevance to contemporary psychoanalysis. Greene explores and experiments on the correlations between language and identity without claiming to find a literary solution (the liberation of language still leads to one child's death, and to the other child's experimenting psychotic syndromes) but highlighting their complex interconnectedness. Literature stands here to be a relevant way to address major human issues by stressing the importance of language in human self-definition: language troubles, failures in symbolic representation, the relative unreliability of one's voice all reinforce Greene's desire to address the ethical problem of the recognition of otherness as an intimate injunction.

Weak Plot and Big Surprise in Graham Greene's "The End of the Party" (Arnaud Schmitt)

21 The historical index inherent in this short story is quite low. There are no references to any particular historical context and only a few details allow the reader deprived of paratextual elements to anchor precisely this text to any particular period: for instance, the dated use of the word "nurse" (here, a person employed or trained to take care of young children) and the quaint reference to people giving a "children's party," even though this does not lead to a specific time anchor. For two researchers working on different literary periods, we could say that Graham Greene's short story represents a form of mimetic neutral ground.

22 A majority of short stories open *in medias res*, with a sparseness of contextualizing details; subsequently, they have more leverage when it comes to strategies of defamiliarization, since disorientation is maybe more sustainable in a short text than in a novel. Indeed, "reading is a kind of 'skillful coping,'" because, as Wolfgang Iser noted, "literary texts are full of unexpected twists and turns, and frustration of expectations" which allow us "to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling the gaps left by the text itself" (Iser 1980 in Tompkins 55). Short stories, more than novels, resort to our ability to fill the gaps as quickly and efficiently as possible. Mimetic elements need to be assembled as early as the first page, whereas in a novel, one can make do with a prolonged state of uncertainty. Doležel wrote that from "the viewpoint of the reader, the fictional text can be characterized as a set of instructions according to which the fictional world is to be recovered and reassembled" (489). A "set of instructions"... It is quite fortunate that recent developments in literary theory have seen the notion of play return to center stage. According to Biederman and Vessel, the "brain is wired for pleasure" (Armstrong 51) or so it seems. Furthermore, "the brain's ability to go back and forth between harmony and dissonance is evidence of a fundamental playfulness characteristic of high-level cortical functioning" (Armstrong 51). This short story perfectly illustrates this balance, as we will see. But it is important to note that, apart from the loose historical context mentioned above, "The End of the Party" does not display any particular anti-mimetic strategies. Two of the key realistic bases are covered: *who* (the characters are onomastically and psychologically identified) and *what* (Francis's fear of the upcoming party). As for the *where* element, quite minimalist here, it has always seemed to me the least important element of the realistic apparatus, one that every text can reasonably do without.

23 Since I believe that what represents the very core of the experience of reading, affects and percepts ("Art does not think less than philosophy, but it thinks through affects and percepts"),[10] drive our hermeneutical acts, but are extremely hard to formalize and do not represent scientific materials for a majority of researchers in the humanities, and since I have limited interest in thematic criticism (unless it focuses on what Jean-Marie Schaeffer called "mimetic modelization"),[11] I keep falling back on a single, but broad and complex, interpretive stance: cognitive narratology, which aims at reconciling a transcendental approach (reader-response theory) with an immanent one (structuralism). However, more often than not, for lack of scientific data, my reader-response approach is unfortunately limited to my own approach.

24 Thankfully, I think that a lot of readers would have a similar experience of "The End of the Party," and this experience could be described as "teleological," which in my opinion can best be analyzed through structuralist eyes. Greene's text is destined to accompany the reader all the way to a particular event, or more precisely to a particular *end*. It mostly concentrates its literary resources on building up narrative momentum in order to create a *sense of expectation*, a form of tension—something which I will come back to. With this short story, "plot is the internal logic of the discourse of mortality" (Brooks 22). As early as the first two pages, there is a strong sense of foreboding that definitely influenced my reading (I am of course referring to reading #1, and I think it is a major shortcoming of plot analyses not to distinguish between this reading and the subsequent ones, conducted mostly by academics for research purposes). The first ten lines are devoted to the traditional stage of *mimetic orientation* (Peter waking up and being the focalizer of a scene in which his brother, Peter, is soon mentioned), but beyond line ten, the narrative shifts into gear: "But the thought soon palled, and the mind went back to the fact which lent the day importance" (181). The "fact" is made explicit a few lines below for the reader who understands that Mrs. Henne-Falcon's children's party is an annual affair, taking place that very 5th of January, the mimetic date of the narrative. From this moment on, the plotting engines start running and they run on lexical fuel: "Peter heart's began to beat fast [...] with uneasiness [...] the whole room seemed suddenly to darken [...] a great bird swooping [...] 'I dreamed that I was dead,' Francis said" (181-182). These words and expressions are arguably meant to convey at least a growing feeling of "uneasiness," if not outright fear. Do they achieve this goal? As Roland Barthes pointed out, we keep misunderstanding the *effects* of language and we often believe that the word "suffering" conveys suffering.[12] He wrote elsewhere that "the message [of a text] is parametrically linked to its performance."[13] As far as I am concerned, the term "uneasiness" does not create actual uneasiness, but it does alert me, too overtly maybe—and this overtness might betray a certain literary tradition—to the strategy of the performance Greene wants me to experience. The lexical field used by Greene in this passage creates a meta-experience: I am aware of fear as a narrative technique, but not as an affect since at this point, my empathy with the characters is too limited for any form of identification to take place. All narratives rely on "reading as an anticipatory and retrospective process of building consistency and constructing patterns" (Armstrong 54). Similarly, Wallace Martin underlined the fact that "we read events forward (the beginning will cause the end) and meaning backward (the end, once known, causes us to identify its beginning)" (127), or at least the beginning as we remember it (especially for a 800-page novel). This echoes Husserl's description of any moment as characterized both by *retentional* and *protentional* horizons (Armstrong 93). But when it comes to short stories, and especially

to short stories like Greene's, "the reading motion" is mostly *protentional* since the *retentional* horizon is logically limited by the actual size of the text. According to Iser, reading implies a "continual interplay between modified expectations and transformed memories" (*Act* 111), but the interplay is of course indexed on the length of the book. With "The End of the Party," the main reading strategy revolves around "expectations," moderately modified since the structure is mostly binary here, or more precisely consecutively binary: will Francis manage to avoid going to the party or not? Will he overcome his fear at the party or not? (Or as an alternative plot: will the party end well this time or not?) I believe that plots reveal what can be called the "structural soul" of a fiction, its *narrative balance*. Instinctively, I was immediately drawn to this aspect of Greene's short story and none of its other features were compelling enough to redirect my analytic attention.

25 Peter Brooks noted that "we have, in a sense, become too sophisticated as readers of plot quite to believe in its orderings" (314). This is not exactly true: it is not a matter of believing in its orderings—plot is not linked to verisimilitude but, as we have seen above, to *effects* and to a drive to carry on with a narrative—it is more a question of accepting its orderings, of letting them *work* on us. But Brooks was right to mention the advantage that some readers have over the plots of their time: they see through them, they know them all, they can anticipate every twist the author painstakingly crafted. And this is true for every literary era, there is always a need for a renewal of plot patterns, even if it means recycling ancient patterns. What was Greene's strategy to throw off-balance the most jaded readers in 1929 and prevent critics from drawing an obvious comparison with Edgar Allan Poe's stories? Two words: *dual focalization*, which was a very modernist thing to do and not a very surprising one for an ambitious writer at that time. Thus, the narratological appeal of this story does not stem from its duality in terms of plots, but in terms of psycho-narration (even though, as we will see, it is not strictly dual).

26 Let us turn back to the first two pages: they are seen (in the broad literary sense: seen, felt, thought) through Peter's eyes until the end of the first dialogue and the line which ends with Francis's answer "Did I?" and signals a brief and momentary shift in focalization: "Francis accepted his brother's knowledge without question, and for a little the two lay silent in bed facing each other, the same green eyes, [...]. The fifth of January, Peter thought again" (182). This passage perfectly illustrates the *modus operandi* of this short story: a constant shift between Peter's Point of View (PoV), Francis's PoV and a form of external focalization, at least in the first part. What I call 'the first part' can be characterized by the anxiety of the looming party (from the beginning to the middle of page 185, where Francis is eventually forced to leave his home with his nurse to go to Mrs. Henne-Falcon's). Its main stake is: will Francis manage to find an excuse not to attend the party? But the structure of the psycho-narration aforementioned is also meant to introduce the stakes of what I call 'the second part': will Peter manage to protect Francis? Indeed, the narratological logic induced by the shifts in focalization creates a *closeness/remoteness dialectics*. The fact that the brothers are twins is mostly used as a strategy of focalization. They seem to know each other so well and yet there is a fundamental distance around which the short story revolves: Francis is isolated in his fear. In addition, one of the subplots of

the first part obviously is: if Francis cannot find excuses to avoid attending the party, will Peter be able to protect him? Below are some examples of

- their *closeness*: "It amused him to imagine that it was himself whom he watched, the same hair, the same eyes, the same lips and line of cheek" (181); "Already experience had taught him how far their minds reflected each other" (182); "Francis accepted his brother's knowledge without question" (182);
- their *remoteness*: "But he was the elder, by a matter of minutes…" (182); "And last year… he turned his face away from Peter" (182); "But though he was grateful he did not turn his face towards his brother. His cheeks still bore the badge of a shameful memory…" (182);
- Peter's sense of *responsibility* towards his brother (and Francis's reliance on him): "[…] had given him self-reliance and an instinct of protection towards the other …" (182); […] "Peter said with decision, prepared to solve all difficulties with one plain sentence…" (183); "When the nurse came in with hot water Francis lay tranquil leaving everything to Peter" (182);
- and finally his brother's *helplessness* (and the limits of Francis's protection): "[…] the other [Francis] who was afraid of so many things" (182); "Their sex humiliated him…" (182); "'I'm sorry,' Peter said, and then worried at the sight of a face creased again by misery and foreboding…" (183).

27 Another sign of Peter's inability to protect his brother (and this is a hint of things to come) is how, as a last resort, Francis entrusts his fate to God.

28 Moving from one mind to the other both reflects and generates the dynamics of protection/helplessness, embedded in the closeness/remoteness dialectics. But as noted above, there is also a neutral PoV in this story. The notions of external and zero focalizations are highly problematic, perhaps more than any other narratological concept. I will not go into the specifics of their various definitions (too often, the history of narratology has been characterized by a string of minor alterations to a notion that was satisfactorily defined in the first place; although of course, sometimes, it is necessary to redefine a term). However, when it comes to focalization, it would be ill-advised to overlook Alan Palmer's major contribution to the representation of thoughts in literature. This short story's use of psycho-narration would be described by Palmer as "contextual thought report," a technique consisting in describing "an aspect of a character's mind […] combined with descriptions of action or context" (Palmer in Herman 331). Palmer goes on to write that "contextual thought report plays an important role in the process of characterization" because "constructions of fictional minds are inextricably bound up with presentations of action. Direct access to inner speech and states of mind is only a small part of the process of building up the sense of a mind in action" (*Ibid*). In the case of "The End of the Party," the balance tilts heavily towards thought report rather than towards action and yet the description of the latter still plays an important role in the story. And of course, within this category of "neutral phrases," dialogues must be included. Is this neutral focalization? Let us consider a few examples in the first part: "The tall starched woman laid the towels across the cans and said […] and she closed the door behind her" (182); "'I'm coming,' he called with despair, leaving the lighted doorway of the house; […] He comforted himself with that, as he advanced steadily across the hall […]" (184-185). They give the impression of being perspective-free, or at least as seen from *a distance*. One knows, of course, that there is no such thing as a perspective-free phrase. Every word in a text is at least materialized through the perspective of the reader. Furthermore, as underlined by Alan Palmer, "narrative fiction is, in essence, the presentation of fictional mental

functioning" (*Fictional* 5). Palmer goes even further to suggest that arguably any information in fiction is seen through a character's eyes. I agree with him, since even "no-narration" passages contribute to the psychological effort of building characters in our mind. It might not be direct psycho-narration but simply indirect psycho-narration, or to use Palmer's terminology, a loose form of thought report: information that ultimately can be attributed to a character, even though no perspective is made explicit. Marie-Laure Ryan wrote that "we see the characters, but we also see with them" (234) and it might be the case when we read "she closed the door behind her." To me, this is *seen* by Francis, we see *with* Francis. Neutrality in fiction is counter-productive as a concept. Or it could mean something totally different from what we usually understand by it, that is to say a passage implying a lack of perspective; so-called perspectival neutrality simply is *low intensity*, that is information your mind skims through without generating the same level of psychological involvement as, for instance, when the word "fear" is mentioned. I could not agree more with Peter Rabinowitz when he claims that "[a]lthough many critics argue that in literature everything is significant, we know from experience that when we read literature (as opposed to the single sentences so many critics offer as examples), it is impossible to keep track of, much less account for, all the details of a text" (19). As far as my reading of this short story is concerned, "she closed the door" implies a low level of affective and emotional intensity, but it is certainly not neutral in terms of perspective, nor comparable to stage directions in a play for instance. My experience of the first scene is then mostly defined by the aforementioned dual psycho-narration and the dialectics whose sole purpose is to build up the tension that will climax in the second part.

29 A possible counter-argument is that the neutrality that I refuse to see is here to disrupt the binary narratological model of the first part of the story. What would be the point of disrupting this duality? Offering an adult perspective, for instance? I am not opposed to this interpretation, but the text simply does not work like this for me. You see *through* Peter and Francis, you see *with* Peter and Francis and you possibly see Peter and Francis, but the latter case contributes to the psychological portrait of the two brothers and their interaction. Even if you consider that the "neutral statements" are a weak form of focalization, they still echo the distance/proximity dialectics characterizing the two brothers' relationship. Once again, we waver between two flows of information, but this time between a quasi-neutral and a highly personalized one.

30 As soon as the reader understands that there is no way out for Francis and that he will have to attend the party, the first part loses some of its interest and one of the main narrative merits of "The End of the Party" is to move quickly and seamlessly to the actual party (185), where the stakes become suddenly different but still dual and still with a subplot: will Francis avoid playing the much dreaded hide-and-seek in the dark? If not, will he overcome his fear? Although the remoteness/closeness dynamics between the two brothers still holds, the constant flow between the minds of the two brothers is no longer as systematic as in the first part, especially since at the end of this part, Peter disappears, leaving Francis to fend for himself. But it remains highly relevant because their bond and differences as twins are soon reintroduced: "As a twin he was in many ways an only child. To address Peter was to speak to his own image in a mirror, an image a little altered by a flaw in the glass, so as to throw back less a likeness of what he was than of what he wished to be [...]" (185). And as seamlessly as the transition from part one to part two, Francis finds himself in the space of a few lines in the situation that has racked him with fear since he woke up and that he has spent the

whole day trying to steer away from. It is worth noting that the two events Greene's plotting strategy is hinged on happen in the blink of an eye, without the reader's attention being overtly alerted: "Without looking at this brother, Francis said, 'Of course I'll play. I'm not afraid, I only thought...' But he was already forgotten by his human tormentors and was able in loneliness to contemplate the approach of the spiritual, the more unbounded torture" (187). As Francis's sentence is interrupted and cut short, so is the dilatory space, the sense of fate, part and parcel of what I call "doom plots," characterized by the likelihood that something bad might befall one of the main characters and energized not by actual events but by virtual ones, i.e. what might happen.

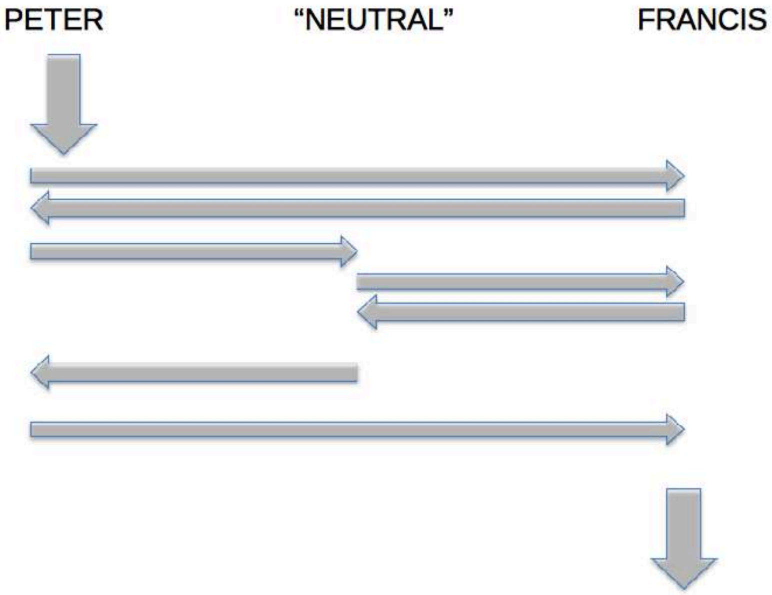
31 It is Francis's turn to disappear in the second part, and Peter's turn to be isolated, not in fear but in his inability to protect his brother. As soon as the game starts, the narrative mostly inhabits Peter's psyche: "Peter, too, stood apart, ashamed of the clumsy manner in which he had tried to help his brother" (187). For a few paragraphs, the reader literally follows Peter in the dark, unaware of Francis's whereabouts and reactions, even though Peter—and of course the reader since this darkness is what the narrative has been homing in on since the beginning—tries, if nothing else, to put himself in his brother's shoes ("Now he could feel, creeping in at the corners of his brain, all Francis's resentment of his championing. [...] Then darkness came down like the wings of a bat and settled on the landing" [187]). It appears at first that there will be no disruptions in the last section's focalization strategy as Peter sets his mind on finding his brother but the opposite happens; there seems to be a blending of voices and feelings on page 187, which results in a form of telepathic communication between brothers. We suddenly shift from Peter's to Francis's PoV: "Peter stood in the centre of the dark deserted floor [...] waiting for the idea of his brother's whereabouts to enter his brain. *But Francis* crouched with fingers on his ears [...]" (my emphasis). The sudden focalization on Francis appears external but soon we reenter his psyche, with one notable difference as it is done through Peter's: "The voice called 'Coming,' and as though his brother's self-possession had been shattered by the sudden cry, Peter Morton jumped with fear. But it was not his own fear. What in his brother was burning panic [...] was in him an altruistic emotion that left the reason unimpaired" (187). This key passage re-enacts the remoteness/proximity dialectics, a combination of telepathic proximity and fundamental distance (Peter is not afraid). The closing of this paragraph ironically bolsters this dynamics, as the narrative audience is told that certainly "between the twins there could be no jargon of telepathy" and that "[t]hey had been together in the womb, and they could not be parted," while knowing that the plot relies on the fact that they can never be *together*. The blending of voices and of PoVs is an illusion, as Francis's fear is imagined by Peter, who nevertheless can never feel his brother's fear. Once again, Francis disappears as Peter resumes his search for his "younger" brother but even when he eventually finds him, the narrative will never adopt Francis's PoV again, thus narratologically foreboding the dramatic ending. Indeed, Francis only exists through Peter's perception of him, which, as the last two pages reveal, is fundamentally insubstantial. Take the following examples from page 188: "Francis did not cry out, but the leap of his own heart revealed to Peter a proportion of Francis's terror"; "[...] and he was aware of how Francis's fear continued in spite of his presence"; "He knew that it was his brother's fear and not his own that he experienced"; "He did not speak again, for between Francis and himself touch was the most intimate communion"; "He could experience the whole progress of his

brother's emotion [...]." When set against the dramatic finale and the *external* realization that he involuntarily killed his brother ("But she was not the first to notice Francis Morton's stillness, where he had collapsed against the wall at the touch of his brother's hand" [188]), all these excerpts retroactively (i.e., during the second reading) convey a grim irony which is the outcome of Greene's PoV shifts or, in the second part, illusionary shifts.

32 In terms of focalization, the story's final paragraph is the only time we undoubtedly inhabit a PoV that is neither Francis's nor Peter's. It appears at first to be Mrs. Henne-Falcon's as her scream indicates that she is the first one to realize what happened, but it is not. Actually, the first part of the last paragraph is a form of unnatural narratology[14] and of ironical focalization: as it happened in the dark, no one was in a position to know that it was the "touch of his brother's hand" that caused Francis's death. Especially not Peter, as we finally realize that, when it comes to his brother, Peter knows *nothing*, not even that his brother is dead: "It was not merely that his brother was dead. His brain, too young to realize the full paradox, yet wondered with an obscure self-pity why it was that the pulse of his brother's fear went on and on, when Francis was now where he had been always told there was no more terror and no more darkness" (189). It goes "on and on" because all along, he has been feeling his own pulse, nothing but his own pulse; there has never been any connection. The end of the story is when the reader finally realizes the madness of pretending to know what the other thinks, let alone feels.

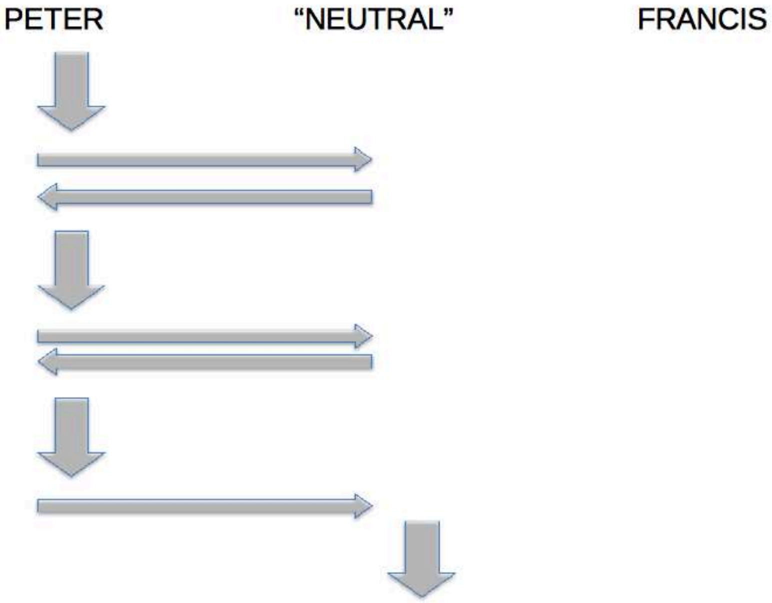
33 But the former sentence is a philosophical flourish diverting attention away from what I perceive as being the core of this story: the structural interaction between plot (what I called dual plots) and focalization, and more precisely the way Graham Greene orchestrates his story's psycho narration in order to give the illusion of proximity while maintaining the fundamental distance between the brothers, a pattern characterized by the figures below (Fig. 1 and 2), in which we see how we oscillate between different focalizations in the two parts of the short story:

Figure 1. Part one of the story oscillates between Peter’s and Francis’s Point of View (PoV)



There is a constant flow between the minds of the twin brothers, although at the end of this part Peter disappears, leaving Francis to fend for himself.

Figure 2. Part two of the story is almost exclusively set from Peter’s PoV and ends with a ‘neutral’ focalization in the last sentence



The end of the story is when the reader finally realizes the madness of pretending to know what the other thinks, let alone feels.

34 Like any plot, whether or not it creates genuine surprise at the end of its unfolding, the real interest lies in how the author underpins its structure and what it reveals about his

perception of his narrative audience. The dialectical energy used by Greene in this story is particularly subtle. As for his use of focalization, it is in keeping with the most sophisticated representations of consciousness found in the works of some of his most famous contemporaries, such as Woolf or Joyce. It also explains why the end of the story may appear to some readers as being disproportionate with regard to the narrative structure upon which it is built. It almost seems *unnatural* for a character to be literally scared to death. And the narrative stakes (attending a party or not, overcoming one's fear or not) finally seem at odds with the story's macabre outcome. Indeed, as remarked upon several times in this article, what Umberto Eco called "signals of suspense" (52) are quite dim and limited to one's child excessive fear. In terms of narrative tension, we have seen that Greene's devices are mostly narratological and circumscribed to the psychological interaction between the two brothers. In *La Tension narrative*, Raphaël Baroni analyzes the three modes of exposition outlined by Meir Sternberg: "surprise" is defined as the "temporary concealment of a crucial information,"[15] "curiosity" as an "only partial erasure in the discourse of a crucial event"[16] and finally "suspense" as "an initial event having the potential to lead to an important result (good or bad)"[17] (107, 108). Similarly, Baroni distinguishes between "prognosis" and "diagnostic" (110); the former refers to a low form of anticipation based only on the premises of a narrative development whereas the latter rests on actual clues allowing the reader to have an uncertain understanding of a narrative situation presented only partially. Greene's peculiar take on plot is a mix of "surprise" and "curiosity," or more precisely a weak form of "curiosity" (since to most readers, myself included, Francis's fear of the party never appears as potentially hazardous for the health of the boy) seemingly only able to trigger off a tenuous level of reader involvement in terms of "prognosis," and unconnected to the genuine "surprise" closing it. Admittedly, the story's main "surprise" stems from the disconnection between "curiosity" and "surprise." In other words, we never go through the "suspense" stage, or the more advanced hermeneutical form of "diagnostic" since the clues to the possible outcome are simply not there and we never realize that Francis's fear is "an initial event having the potential to lead to an important result (good or bad)"—at least not *that* bad.

35 As a conclusion, through this unexpected and hyperbolic outcome, Green seems to tell his reader that while pretending to build a *minor* plot, he was building something else, a *major* surprise. His strategy is a very modernist way of telling us that plot is not what we think it is—or at least, *his* plot is not what we think it is—while making sure that we keep in mind what it normally is, so that we realize that what he has been doing all along is not what we think he has been doing: it is the narratological pattern that makes this play with the narrative audience worthwhile. I am convinced that this discrepancy between expectations and outcome is exactly what the author wanted us to focus on.

A joint analysis, or joining our analyses

36 The present undertaking is not aimed at criticizing another critic's take on a text, in the sense of indicating the *faults* of someone else's analysis. It would be in total contradiction with the very nature of literary analysis which is but one area of a broader category, literary theory. On the topic of a so-called critical subjectivity,

Umberto Eco's *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* serves as our reference, including Eco's but also Culler's, Rorty's and Brooke-Rose's perspectives on the particularly contentious topic of what constitutes a *sensible* interpretation. Eco, as broad-minded a critic as could be, believed that certain analyses can be seen as "unlimited semiosis" (23). In other words, textual interpretations that do not seem connected in any way to the text they pretend to analyze. For Eco, there is a textual reality we cannot jettison: "Between the mysterious history of a textual production and the uncontrollable drift of its future readings, the text qua text still represents a comfortable presence, the point to which we can stick" (88). This "comfortable presence" we can "stick to" is what American philosopher Joseph Margolis called the "inviolable constraints" (82) we believe works of art possess. The fact that the two main characters in "The End of the Party" are named Francis and Peter certainly is an "inviolable constraint", and the fact that Francis dies at the end is another, although less inviolable than the first, since we are certain that one could convincingly argue that Francis cannot die since he does not actually exist. Greene's short story would then be interpreted as the account of a child's schizophrenic fixation on a non-existing twin. But Eco is certainly right to contend that a text has a *factual being* and not everything can be said about it as, for instance, to take an extreme example, that "The End of the Party" takes place in China in the Middle-Ages and that the characters are Nà and Jing. Eventually, Eco sensibly challenges "Valéry's statement according to which 'il n'y a pas de vrai sens d'un texte,'" but accepts "the statement that a text can have many senses," although he categorically refuses "the statement that a text can have every sense" (Eco 141). Briefly, we think Eco should have differentiated between what you say *about a text* (the names of the characters), and what you say *about your interpretation of a text* (the nature of the relationship between the two brothers). To put it differently, it is similar to distinguishing between *reading* and *interpreting*, but we are far from convinced that this distinction always stands.[18] When it comes to what is said *about* a text, "the critic who 'recovers' the meaning of any given work always does so by establishing a relationship between the work and some systems of ideas outside it" (Scholes *in* Rabinowitz 19). To conclude this brief ideological contextualization, we have both been using, in our respective interpretations of Greene's story, different tools coming from distinct "systems of ideas" but, as we will see, we also agree on some unquestionable features. Now comes the stimulating dialectical part in which we will delve into our differences and similarities and try to account for them, while attempting to elaborate on what they might reveal of our respective critical positions about the link between literature and criticism. The result is somehow what we hoped it would be: we are presented with two largely different outlooks on the same short story, which allows us quite a lot of scope and material for comparison and analysis. It is a fact, mentioned in our introduction, that we belong to a similar generation and that we trained academically in Anglophone literature and French theory (structuralism, including Genette's narratology, and philosophy, including Lacan). But it is also fair to say that, along the way, we have developed different theoretical proclivities. Nowhere is this more visible than in our "Works Cited" sections. Nathalie Jaëck's reflects her strong intellectual involvement with contemporary French theory, and Arnaud Schmitt's mirrors his growing interest in a "scientific" approach to literary theory. In a way, to quote Scholes again, our systems of ideas are doubly "outside": outside the work under study, of course, but also quite dependent on adjacent critical fields. Beyond our differences, our analyses also emphasize a fact that many critics choose to overlook when they decide to make authoritative claims on the nature or the ultimate meaning of a particular work: that once we have opted for a particular critical angle—and we are primed to do so by our cultural, intellectual influences—we tend not to pay attention to critical alternatives and we inevitably hyperbolize our critical claims, be it simply by privileging them over alternatives. Such an enterprise crucially forces us to materially acknowledge and confront these alternatives, and to read our respective analysis against these new critical data; we will give examples of this below.

Common points

37 Let us first concentrate on what we have in common. In Graham Greene's "The End of the Party," we both see a considerable amount of *duality*. Actually, we analogously based our interpretations on the analysis of complex dual structures, whether formal, thematic or intellectual. Jaëck's reading of the story hinges on Greene's elaboration on the Gothic motif of the *double* that relies on the *dual* nature of dialogicity in the text, and on the *hybrid* nature of the use of free indirect speech. She eventually addresses the psychological and discursive nature of the relationship between *twin* children, and more generally of the dis/similar other. She links these different dualities to a more wide-ranging dialectics, one that lies at the very heart of her current research: the minor/major dialectics. As for Schmitt, his dualities are more narratological as he turns his attention to the interaction between *dual* focalization and *double* plots, and to the *dialectical* impact it has on the unfolding of the narrative from a reader's perspective. He uses this perspective also to reflect on zero focalization, and perhaps to question the fact that there is one in the text: he concludes that we mainly "see with" the children, even when we do not see directly through them—which, of course, we both agree upon. Jaëck reckons that dual focalization serves Greene's purpose in this typical story of twins, how the technical process of dual perspective and the dialectics of closeness/remoteness it allows constitute a very adequate stylistic way to approach Peter's ambivalence—to her it has got the role of a formal clue, leading her to interpret the text, and in this case to highlight an underlying structure of, indeed, closeness and remoteness that is relevant to the case of Peter and Francis as twins. In other words, Jaëck is also interested in what the text *says about* duality—but is it what Schmitt calls "thematic criticism"?[19] Perhaps this is an interesting element of further discussion worthy of another article: literature as interpretation of the world, or rather as alternative way to approach knowledge. In all cases, we both acknowledge the importance of structure in itself because of what it does to the reader (mainly Schmitt) and what it says about the self and the world, as relevant cognitive discourse (mainly Jaëck).

38 We both saw an overriding pattern in this text, one that we might have been prepared to see for various reasons, but also one that is certainly embedded in the textual features of the text: the choice of twin brothers as main characters and the mostly dual focalization, going back and forth between the brothers' differently tormented minds. This aspect of the story might not be an "inviolable constraint," but from our (professional) perspective, it is difficult to miss it. Besides, once you strip the story of this aspect, i.e. the dual focalization (as a narratological technique and a psychological and discursive dimension), "The End of the Party" loses its main stake and a substantial

part of its narrative interest. Of course, there is always the possibility of being mistaken and we may be missing out on another major feature of the text.

39 Another common point of interest is the treatment of time: we both note Greene's production of a sense of ominousness in the text, and link it to his treatment of time in the story. We both deal with the formal manipulation of diegetic time, note the gaps in narrative time, and interpret it basically in the same manner, though there would be an interesting notion to discuss—Schmitt argued there is no real suspense, but Jaëck is not so sure, a discrepancy due to a different take on focalisation zero. The major reason why Jaëck sees suspense in the story is probably linked to the fact that what Schmitt calls "the weak plot of the text," which Jaëck agrees on and understands, immediately collided, in her first reading, with the archetypal 19th-century Gothic plot of the stories of Doubles. For her, suspense is thus indeed not created so much by Greene in the actual, mimetic plot of the story, but in its playful incorporation of a literary pattern. It is thus of a metatextual nature: Is Greene reworking the pattern of duality? Are the twins going to follow the destiny of their fictive forebears? What kind of twist, what kind of "surprise" (in Schmitt's terms), is the modernist rewriting going to allow? Comparing the analyses of two specialists is also a way to delineate the places where analyses diverge, or do not totally converge—it is a way to see which categories leave room for interpretation. In this case, it seems to further Schmitt's idea that focalisation zero is indeed a concept that needs ampler development in general narratological criticism.

40 Jaëck was very interested in the notions of retentional and protentional horizons, and also the notion of expectation as concepts, because to her they are effective, and allow a further development of, or at least a more detailed approach in, her analysis. It seems to her that the dynamics described by Schmitt can also be embedded and applied to Peter himself: when she argued that Peter was stuck in-between past memories and anticipation of the future, it could be usefully rephrased as stuck between the retentional and the protentional horizons. Jaëck thinks she will use these categories, because the notion of a horizon and the dynamic nature of the process it defines, seem very adequate and operational to her. In "The End of the Party," Francis is both blocked back by the retentional horizon and utterly panicked by the protentional horizon: there is no stability, no autonomy of the present, dynamically torn and deprived of any solidity or reality. It thus seems an adequate concept to address the issue of temporal dilations: it definitely adds meaning to the more common notions of analepses and prolepses by adding the dynamic notion of process; it is not just a self-contained jump in or back in time, it is a way to name the active attraction of the two horizons. It makes it possible to reinterpret the conception of time in a dynamic rather than a static manner, and the two children's parties not as static points before or after, but as active lines that draw Francis both ways. In Deleuzian terms, they are not lines of escape; on the contrary they are morbid lines of reterritorialisation of the present in an overhanging, controlling and oppressive time structure. To Jaëck, these terms are thus truly efficient, because their technicity permits to inscribe intention and meaning. It is here interesting to note that widely different tools (cognitive narratology and psycho-philosophy) enable the authors to draw relatively close textual interpretations of the treatment of time.

Differences

41 And now for differences. Though we both decided to privilege the duality inherent in the psychonarration of the twins, and also focused on Greene's treatment of time, our paths parted: what we decided *to make out of* this duality, for instance, was surprisingly different. At the very core of this difference lies one of the key questions every critic should ask himself/herself regularly: what is it that we do with texts? To which one must add a series of corollary questions: how does it enlighten the text? What purpose does it serve? What does it reveal about us as readers? What does it reveal about the community we belong to? The answers to these questions go a long way towards a better understanding of the not-necessarily-natural link between fiction and the discourses it generates. After reading our respective analyses of Greene's story, anyone can see that we do very different things with texts.

42 A good way to grapple with the fundamental differences in our readings of the same text is perhaps to focus on what we *didn't* see or pay attention to. Indeed, duality is just a cornerstone on which many different stones can be assembled. For instance, Schmitt obviously overlooked the importance of the "Gothic stone"—we assume here that one of the purposes of interpretation is to recover some of the hypertextual influences of the text, to insert the text where it also belongs, in a textual network it explicitly addresses and comments upon. This might be easily accounted for: even though Gothic literature it is a major influence in America, it simply is not the area Schmitt works on. Although he is aware of what American Gothic means in terms of literary and (more generally) artistic history, his knowledge of this specific field is too limited for him to make any noteworthy contribution on the topic. He nevertheless broached the matter of influence, Poe being an obvious one (as well as Henry James, but he only realized this after writing his first part). His interest lay more in the question of the readers' narrative expectations *in 1929* and how Greene could have positioned himself with regard to them when he designed his macabre tale of twins.

43 Conversely, Jaëck's stress and keener grasp on literary history (working on 19th-century literature, she is more used to integrating such aspects into her critical *modus operandi* than Schmitt who mostly works on authors who, more often than not, are influenced by other *contemporary* authors, the historical dimension playing a more limited part in their aesthetic practices) would be a perfect stepping stone (to carry the "building metaphor" further) to a better understanding of Greene's technique to renew the genre, or at least to provide an alternative reading and rewriting to past Gothic narratives. Jaëck chose to focus on different facets of this short story's historical frame: according to her, the close and unexpected interplay between an earlier genre—the Gothic—and a dynamic literary period spanning several decades turns this "dual text" into an elaborate palimpsest, superposing Gothic motifs with modernist experiments. Without having access to the same depth of historical contextualization, Schmitt nevertheless points out that Greene's peculiar plotting strategy stems from a modernist representation of streams of consciousness.

44 We both agree on this necessary stage of analysis: ascertaining how a text is shaped by a literary or cultural tradition, and also how it contributes, in turn, to changing this very same tradition; quite logically, this stage implies uncovering hypertextual traces. Besides, our different tools also lead us to draw the same conclusions about the metatextual nature of the text: for both of us, it is a text that stages its own writing

process. For Schmitt, it is visible in the overt nature of the narrative technique; for Jaëck, in the explicit signalling of by-the-book modernism: "impressions," "frame," "fragments" are all there, highlighting the fact that the children's voices are also experiments in Modernism as a way out of a stifling controlling voice—a dissident offspring of authoritative Realism. Both "sets of tools" conduce us to be aware of the central fact that the text is also a self-conscious artefact, and that texts stage their own writing processes. However, we do not produce the same discourse with that textual fact. Jaëck's interest lies in this respect mainly in characterizing the movement the text belongs to, the literary stance of the author, and through the awareness of metatextuality she attempts to delineate the characteristics of the text that might link it to a literary context, to a literary intention that she is interested in historicizing. For Jaëck, the text takes rank in the modernist movement, and reading this text is a way to improve one's understanding of modernist intentions—notably in what literature then originally proposed in terms of an exploration of the links between the configuration of narration and the configuration of the self. Schmitt sees this historicizing process as a necessary and fascinating stage, but he believes a text's main semantic influence does not spring from the period during which it was *written* but from the period(s) during which it is *read* (of course, to return to Eco's *intentio operis*, the former has inevitably an influence on the latter); in other words, how contemporary readings activate the meanings of older texts.

45 One could argue that picking out duality as the narrative balance and essence of this text and considering the contextualizing stage as a necessary one sum up the extent of our "agreement" on "what to do" with this story. But it is also fair to say that both our analyses also demonstrate a fair share of close reading (mostly of the structural implementation of psychonarration) and a modest one of traditional thematic reading (interpreting the psychology of characters as if they were real human beings). But, to come to the main point of the self-reflective part of our article, our conclusions diverge when it comes to deciding the *type of discourse* we want to extract from the text.

46 We both use the text for different purposes: as her conception of what it centrally means to study literature implies, Jaëck sees the text as a double opportunity: to progress in knowledge within the scientific field of literary criticism—precisely here to address and qualify the appropriation of the motif of the double by new-born Modernism, through elaborate manipulation of focalisation—and to see how literature constitutes an alternative cognitive tool, how it serves to illuminate a better understanding of the link between language and reality. As far as the second aspect is concerned, "The End of the Party" illustrates a persistent interest in her current research, the minor/major dialectics, the way a major mode of representation is challenged, or not, by the advent of a minor dissident mode. Using a Foucauldian approach, she sees literature as embedded in larger discursive stakes and fictional texts as alternative actors in wider philosophical, social, political debates. As outlined in the Deleuze and Guattari quote used at the beginning of Schmitt's analysis, he believes one of the most essential points ever made about literature is that the way fiction "thinks" is fundamentally different from the way philosophy reflects on life. In fact, the other key quote he confesses to having overused in his own research echoes Deleuze and Guattari's remark: "Literature is something other than reality." (Hamburger 9) The type of *experience* induced by literature is, for Schmitt, mostly about intimacy and most of what comes out of this fundamentally private dialogue is not academic material. But what constitutes fascinating scientific material is the study of how texts work on

readers and of how we work on texts, and what it reveals about the multiple cognitive processes of "dealing with literature."

47 Finally, Jaëck proposes to raise the issue of the "scientificity" of literary criticism, because she believes it is one of the central questions that such a critical endeavour as this double paper raises: the aim is not so much to "check" every single point of each other's analysis, as to be able to illustrate the reasons for the possibility of mutual validation beyond partially different results—not out of mutual complacency, but simply because there exists a scientific method in literary criticism, and because we feel it was respected by both participants. The preceding remark may sound defensive: but all too often literary critics are faced with the disparaging argument—even among their own ranks—that they may virtually say *anything* on a text, that their analyses are "far-fetched," over-straining the text, imposing on it personal obsessions or central interests, or that they are simply "purely descriptive," sterile tautologies. There are some such analyses—but then, they are easily marked and dismissed as such. This paper tries to address the idea that not *any* analysis of a text is valid, but that it needs to be *validated* by the community of critics—a community that, just like any other scientific community, is duly constituted by diplomas, scientific productions and academic positions. Here, as in any science, experts do come across different results, and luckily so, because this is the way to progress in the way we circumscribe our object, and how we devise evolving methods. The history of literary criticism amply proves how mobile critical stances on texts are, but such differences are certainly not proof that *anything* is valid—on the contrary, these differences stimulate greater scientific awareness. To accept each other's alternative results, which is always a challenging task, we need to resort to an objective, informed, critical assessment of the method: I did not "find" *that*, but am I convinced of its validity; in other words, was it obtained through a correct use of the tools? Common discourse establishes a discrimination between "hard sciences" and "soft sciences," or "Sciences" and "Humanities" in an Anglophone context—and many critics in literature are engaged in giving their methods an increased level of scientificity, be it to protect the field from ongoing assaults, or because they are themselves annoyed at what they often perceive as self-indulging a-theoretical commentary on literary works. Jaëck tends to read in Arnaud Schmitt's cognitive references such a claim for "scientificity," precisely modelled on theoretical models, on the desire to create more and more refined models to deal with texts as opposed to analyses that otherwise run the risk of being either descriptive and "thematic," as Schmitt has it, or vastly subjective. As he himself says in this paper: "Schmitt's mirrors his growing interest in a 'scientific' approach to literary theory." It seems to Jaëck that such a claim leads him to integrate and take rank in the adjacent field of narrative pragmatism and cognition, that is indeed more rigorously fenced, and where he can engage in a debate with well-identified authoritative interlocutors about a promising new development in literary criticism—perhaps a scientific field within the broader literary field.

48 Jaëck, however, believes that literary criticism definitely stands as a valid and transmissible scientific field in itself. It is as unstable as every scientific field but shared and agreed-upon at a given time by the scientific community. It is based, like any other field of research, on a corpus of analyses that have been validated by the community of scientific researchers, and that constitute the body of critical reference anyone working on any author should endeavour to be extensively aware of, should be able to refer to, and confront his/her own work against. As is the rule in any scientific field,

criticism in literature relies on scientific methods, as it proceeds by researching the existing literature on its object, advancing propositions, endeavouring to prove them, and then submitting the results to those with authority in the field—as we are doing with this joint reading, though "the scientific community" is here drastically reduced to two people! As for Schmitt, he does not think that one approach is more scientific than another nor is he particularly in pursuit of a higher degree of "scientificity;" he even remains sceptical about the benefits of regarding literary theory as a scientific field; he actually distinguishes between literary theory and literary analysis: he sees the former as an offshoot of philosophy, a very specific branch mostly focusing on how literature contributes to the more general study of essential phenomena such as, for instance, reality, existence, knowledge whereas the latter is restricted to the study of literary texts, thus displaying far less epistemic scope. As regards the issue of what falls under "scientificity," Schmitt agrees with Jaëck on the potential for validation inherent in literary criticism, but he is highly dubious about the criteria used to "enforce this scientificity." He even sees this urge to "validate" as intrinsically opposed to what constitutes the very nature of the *act of reading*. This last point leads him to the reason why he is currently more interested in using tools traditionally belonging to cognitive sciences: first and foremost, it is not because he perceives them as more scientific, and thus more reliable or simply "valid." It is only because, being primarily destined for the study of our psychological inner workings and reflexes, they are more adapted to analysing what he regards now as his main research topic: *reading* (or *experiencing literature*) as opposed to literature. He is keen to stress that resorting to a more scientific approach has never crossed his mind and remains irrelevant as to what he is trying to achieve in his research. Nevertheless, he is surprised by the extreme prudence of the French humanities, and its persistent unwillingness to simply try something different and take (very limited) risks. For instance, he is puzzled by the fact that literary criticism has neglected major cognitive phenomena, which directly influence the semantic encounter between text and reader. He quite certainly is willing to use different tools, borrowed from different fields, cognitive sciences being one, but he does not see one approach as prevailing over the others.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adam-Smith, Janet. *Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson: A Record of Friendship and Criticism*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1948.

Alber, Jan, Stefan Iversen, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Brian Richardson. "Unnatural Narratives. Unnatural Narratology: Beyond Mimetic." *Narrative* 18.2 (May 2010): 113-136. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40856404

Armstrong, Paul B. *How Literature Plays with the Brain: The Neuroscience of Reading and Art*. Baltimore : The John Hopkins UP, 2013.

Baroni Raphaël. *La Tension narrative: suspense, curiosité et surprise*. Paris: Seuil, 2007.

Barthes, Roland. *Fragments d'un discours amoureux*. Paris: Seuil, 1977.

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z, Œuvres complètes, Tome 2*. Paris: Seuil, 1994.

Brooke-Rose, Christine. "Palimpsest History." *Umberto Eco. Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 125-138. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511627408.007

Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot, Design and Intention in Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984.

Culler, Jonathan. "In Defence of Overinterpretation." *Umberto Eco. Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 109-123. DOI : 10.1017/CBO9780511627408.006

Deleuze, Gilles. *Critique et clinique*. Paris: Minuit, 1993.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Qu'est-ce que la Philosophie* ? Paris: Minuit, 1991.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Minuit, 1981.

Doležel, Lubomir. *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1998.

Eco, Umberto. *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994.

Hamburger, Käte. *The Logic of Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana UP (1973) 1993.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading, A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978. 50-69.

Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." *Reader Response Criticism*. Ed. Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1980.

Klein, Mélanie. *The Psychoanalysis of Children*. London: Hogarth Press, [1932] 2011.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *Lectures d'enfance*. Paris: Galilée, 1991.

Martin, Wallace. *Recent Theories of Narrative*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986.

Palmer, Alan. "The Mind Beyond the Skin." In *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*. Ed. David Herman. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2003. 322-348.

Palmer, Alan. *Fictional Minds*. Lincoln: U. of Nebraska P., 2004.

Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand. *Ce Temps qui ne passe pas*. Paris: Gallimard, NRF, 1997.

Rabinowitz, Peter J. *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1988.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris: Seuil, 1990.

Rorty, Richard. "The Pragmatist's Progress." *Umberto Eco. Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 89-108. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511627408.005

Rosset, Clément. *Le Réel et son double*. 1976. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Cognitive maps and the construction of narrative space" in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*. Ed. David Herman. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2003. 214-242.

Schaeffer, Jean-Marie. *Pourquoi la fiction ?* Paris: Seuil, 1999.

Van Gunsteren, Julia. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Impressionism*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990.

Zazzo, René. *Les Jumeaux, le couple et la personne*. 1960. Paris: PUF, 2009.

NOTES

1. James wrote an essay on Robert Louis Stevenson, and thus praised his "Child's Garden of Verses." (Adam Smith 69).

2. "Une illusion oraculaire." All French to English translations are mine.

3. "Le réel n'est admis que sous certaines conditions et seulement jusqu'à un certain point : s'il abuse et se montre déplaisant, la tolérance est suspendue."

4. "Le temps régresse vers l'amont et galope vers l'aval. Il mêle les temps, les parcourt en tous sens, il délie le temps."

5. "Un usage mineur de la langue majeure [qui] trace dans la langue une sorte de langue étrangère, qui n'est pas une autre langue, mais un devenir-autre de la langue, une minoration de cette langue majeure."

6. "Nul ne sait écrire. Chacun, le plus 'grand' surtout, écrit pour attraper par et dans le texte quelque chose qu'il ne sait pas écrire. Qui ne se laissera pas écrire, il le sait. Baptisons cette chose *infantia*, ce qui ne parle pas, ne se parle pas. Une enfance qui n'est pas un âge de la vie, qui hante le discours adulte et qui lui échappe."

7. "L'enfant 'tari' [...] qui fait d'autant mieux l'enfant qu'aucun flux d'enfance n'émane de lui."

8. To Peter, Francis is indeed "abject" in the way Julia Kristeva defined the concept: he represents the threat of a breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and "object," a word often used by Peter to refer to Francis. Francis is more a hallucinated double of all he cannot assimilate in himself than an autonomous subject. He is what "is radically excluded and [...] draws me toward the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva 2).

9. "Le soi refiguré par le récit est en réalité confronté à l'hypothèse de son propre néant."

10. "L'art ne pense pas moins que la philosophie, mais il pense par affects et percepts" (Deleuze and Guattari 64; my translation).

11. "La modélisation mimétique" (Schaeffer 122).

12. "Ce qui bloque l'écriture amoureuse, c'est l'illusion d'expressivité : écrivain, ou me pensant tel, je continue à me tromper sur les *effets* du langage: je ne sais pas que le mot 'souffrance' n'exprime aucune souffrance et que, par conséquent, l'employer, non seulement ce n'est rien communiquer, mais encore, très vite, c'est agacer (sans parler du ridicule)" (Barthes, *Fragments* 114).

13. "Le message est lié paramétriquement à sa performance" (Barthes, *S/Z* 698).

14. See Alber et al (2010).

15. "La dissimulation provisoire d'une information cruciale" (my translation).

16. "Un effacement seulement partiel dans le discours d'un événement crucial" (my translation).

17. "Un événement initial ayant la potentialité de conduire à un résultat important (bon ou mauvais)" (my translation).

18. Furthermore, on the aspect of interpretation, Schmitt totally agrees with Richard Rorty's reply to Eco and, more generally, with the Pragmatist ethos: "He [Eco] insists upon a distinction between *interpreting* texts and *using* texts. This, of course, is a distinction we pragmatists do not wish to make. In our view, all anybody ever does with anything is use it. Interpreting something, knowing it, penetrating to its essence, and so on are all just various ways of describing some process of putting it to work" (Rorty 93).

19. It is, but Schmitt does not mean to discard thematic criticism, although according to him it has given rise to a form of criticism that, more often than not, is too remote from the experience of the text. As we all know, and this is exactly what Eco dreads, anything can be said about any text. But Schmitt acknowledges the fact that thematic criticism, when it is well done, can also be a very enlightening way to connect our experience of a text to our experiences in the world.

ABSTRACTS

In this article, two French scholars look back on their practices as critics via a double, reflexive analysis of Graham Greene's short story, "The End of the Party." While they belong to the same generation, they were influenced by different theoretical backgrounds: French classical narratology and French theory on the one hand, post-classical narratology and cognitive poetics on the other. This approach was a means for them to assess the nature and relevance of their critical tools, figure out how these tools impact the reading of a selected text and what they reveal about their respective academic practices of literature. From a practical point of view, they worked on the same short story, each writing an independent analysis, and then produced a joint commentary in order to see what the process revealed about their respective approaches to literary theory. The purpose of this strategy was to better understand their critical methods but also the stakes inherent in literary interpretation at the beginning of the twenty first century. Eventually, they hope that this dual analysis will contribute to renew their respective methods.

Dans cet article, deux universitaires français reviennent sur leurs pratiques en tant que chercheurs en littérature par le biais d'une double analyse de la nouvelle de Graham Greene « The End of the Party ». Bien qu'appartenant à la même génération, ils ont été influencés par des champs théoriques différents : la narratologie classique et ce qu'on appelle la *French theory* pour l'une, la narratologie postclassique et la poétique cognitive pour l'autre. Cette analyse fut l'occasion pour eux de faire un bilan de leurs outils critiques, d'interroger la nature et la validité de ces outils et ainsi de comprendre dans quelle mesure ceux-ci influencent leur lecture d'un même texte, et ce qu'ils révèlent de leurs méthodes herméneutiques en général. D'un point de vue pratique, ils ont travaillé sur la même nouvelle, en ont proposé chacun une étude, et produit en dernier lieu un commentaire commun, en tentant de mettre en évidence ce que cette façon de travailler révèle de leurs approches respectives de la théorie littéraire. Cette stratégie visait à mieux comprendre leurs méthodes critiques mais aussi les enjeux inhérents à l'interprétation littéraire au début du vingt-et-unième siècle. *In fine*, ils espèrent que cette double lecture contribuera à renouveler la méthode de chacun.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Greene Graham, enfance, littérature, narratologie, parodie, gémellité, dualité
Keywords: Greene Graham, childhood, literature, narratology, parody, twins, duality

AUTHORS

NATHALIE JAËCK

Nathalie Jaëck is Professor of nineteenth-century British literature at the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne, and head of the research group CLIMAS. Her PhD was on the Sherlock Holmes stories, and she is interested in the turn of the century and literature of adventure. She wrote two books, *Les histoires de Sherlock Holmes: une affaire d'identité* (Pessac: PUB, 2008) and *Charles Dickens: l'écriture comme pouvoir, l'écriture comme résistance* (Paris: Ophrys, 2008), as well as numerous articles on the authors of the period. Contact: nathalie.jaeck [at] u-bordeaux3.fr

ARNAUD SCHMITT

Arnaud Schmitt is a professor at the University of Bordeaux. His field of research is American literature, philosophy, and narratology, but he has also worked extensively on the concept of "autofiction" (he has devoted a book and several articles—both in English and French—to "autofiction" and "self-narration"). He is currently writing a new book on the phenomenology of reading autobiographical texts. Contact: arnaud.schmitt [at] u-bordeaux.fr